Annex to the note verbale dated 15 November 2011 from the Permanent Mission of Serbia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Letter from the Permanent Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly

We have the honour to transmit herewith, on behalf of the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia, the Joint Declaration on Ending Displacement and Ensuring Durable Solutions for Vulnerable Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons adopted at the Ministerial Review Conference on Solving the Refugee Situation in the Western Balkans, held on 7 November 2011 in Belgrade.

We have the honour to request that the present letter and its enclosure be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 62.

(*Signed*) Ivan **Barbalić**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina

(*Signed*) Ranko **Vilović**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia

(*Signed*) Milorad **Šćepanović**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Montenegro

(*Signed*) Feodor **Starčević**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Serbia

Enclosure

Joint Declaration on Ending Displacement and Ensuring Durable Solutions for Vulnerable Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

1. We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, declare our conviction that achieving just, comprehensive and durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons in the region will contribute in a crucial manner to deepen our good-neighbourly relations and stability in the region. We recognize that the successful resolution of these issues is vital to the further enhancement of positive and productive relations among our countries and citizens and the underpinning of our respective bids to join the European Union.

2. We recall the principles established in the Sarajevo Declaration of 31 January 2005 and elaborated in the Belgrade joint communiqué of 25 March 2010, in particular full respect for the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons and the mutual obligation to closely cooperate and synchronize our activities in order to ensure durable solutions for them, either through voluntary return and reintegration or local integration.

3. We met today in Belgrade, to review the significant progress achieved with regard to assuring durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons remaining from the 1991-1995 displacement in the region, including internally displaced persons in Montenegro from 1999, and to identify the final scope of needs as well as to reaffirm our commitment to overcoming remaining obstacles for those still in need of durable solutions.

4. Taking into account relevant legislation, strategies, programmes and action plans of each country, as well as international norms and standards, we recommit our Governments to cooperate in a spirit of good faith to protect and promote the rights of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons, including existing individual rights, and to provide all necessary political, material, legal, social and other support required to end their displacement and enable them to live as equal citizens in our countries, free from any form of discrimination.

5. To this end, our Governments have developed a regional working plan outlining the actions we are taking to remove the obstacles and to achieve durable solutions. Further, our Governments have agreed upon a joint regional multi-year programme to secure durable solutions for the most vulnerable refugees and internally displaced persons. The joint regional multi-year programme is an integral part of this joint declaration, and the programme will be presented at a Donor Conference in early 2012, for support. We agree that at the Donor Conference the remaining needs will be presented and pursued individually in parallel by each Government, according to need, with the aim of bringing this protracted 1991-1995 displacement to an end in a dignified, sustainable and lasting manner.

6. With this, we are also pleased to state that outstanding issues related to the regional aspects of 1991-1995 displacement have been solved between our countries, such as:

- Ensuring that all refugees accommodated in collective centres will be provided with an adequate housing solutions;
- Establishing a regional framework for addressing the housing needs of vulnerable persons, including vulnerable ex-occupancy/tenancy rights holders, and taking into account concrete national programmes;
- Ensuring that facilitated and accelerated procedures are in place to provide guarantee to civil documentation for all refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons, to enable them to fully and effectively enjoy their rights and achieve durable solutions; this entails that genuine documents already in their possession shall be given particular attention in these procedures;
- Guaranteeing a free and informed choice of durable solutions for the refugees and internally displaced persons;
- Managing donated funds through a trust fund mechanism to ensure that donated funds will benefit the agreed upon priority population in the region;
- Ensuring continued regional data exchange to avoid multiplication of assistance and to ensure that no one be excluded.

7. We hereby express our deep appreciation for the active role of the international community over the past years, particularly for its persistent efforts and support in seeking permanent solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons in the region. We welcome the Donor Conference as the international community's final collective effort to close the chapter of the refugee population from 1991-1995 in the region.

8. The regional programme provides for durable solutions to outstanding issues on the regional aspects of displacement. We remain committed to pursuing efforts at the respective national levels with the view to reach the final resolution of the refugee situations.

Belgrade, 7 November 2011

(*Signed*) Sven **Alkalaj**
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Bosnia and Herzegovina

(*Signed*) Gordan **Jandroković**
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
and European Integration
Republic of Croatia

(*Signed*) Milan **Roćen**
Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration
Montenegro

(*Signed*) Vuk **Jeremić**
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Serbia